

A SOCIALIST COMMENTARY ON COLONIAL AFFAIRS

Venture

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Comment

THE GOLD COAST MAKES A START

FOR the next few months, all eyes in West Africa will be on the Gold Coast, where the work of constitution-making has now begun. Last year, the Watson Commission Report on the Gold Coast disturbances pointed to dissatisfaction with the constitution as one of the chief causes. The Commission also made some very far-reaching suggestions of its own as to desirable changes in the constitution, and these suggestions have become the subject of acute controversy which has continued unabated till now. (See *Empire* numbers for September and November, 1948). It is clear that public opinion will demand a measure of self-government, yet it will not be easy to frame a constitution for the Gold Coast. Its makers will have to decide on such complex questions as the position of the chiefs, the extent of the franchise, and the balance of representation at the centre of the three regions of the Gold Coast. It is precisely because the solutions provided for these problems in the present constitution have been considered unsatisfactory that the whole business of constitution-making has to be undertaken again. But how should the alteration be made? Through a Legislative Council whose composition is admittedly unsatisfactory? By imposition from above? By a constituent assembly? (And who would choose the constituent assembly?) The Gold Coast Government has chosen none of these courses. A Committee of 38 members has been set up to examine and 'to consider the extent to which the Watson constitutional proposals can be accepted and the manner in which they should be implemented.' The Governor has gone outside the bounds of the Legislative Council, but he has used existing constitutional machinery in the regions where the method of direct election has not yet

been introduced. The resulting composition is: four chiefs nominated by the Joint Provincial Council, including the well-known moderate, Nana Sir Tsibu Darku IX; four members nominated by the Ashanti Confederacy Council, including two chiefs; four nominated by the Northern Territories Territorial Council, including two chiefs; and 27 others nominated by the Governor after consultations with different sections of the community, including the two leaders of the nationalist Gold Coast Convention, Mr. George Grant and Dr. J. B. Danquah. We have no doubt that this selection (like any other selection) will be the subject of much criticism, but this will be a healthy sign. In our view it is satisfactory that the net has been so widely cast, and the selection of an African chairman, Mr. Justice Coussey, is a welcome departure from colonial custom. We hope that the Committee will approach its task in a progressive spirit, and that its work will be closely followed, discussed and criticised by the whole people of the Gold Coast.

THE NEW UNIVERSITIES

The granting of a Royal Charter to the new University College of the West Indies, and the cutting of the first sod on the site of the Ibadaan University College in Nigeria are events symbolic of the great cultural expansion now proceeding in the Colonies. This is particularly noticeable in the West Indies, where it is commented upon by every visitor. Nobody has been surprised to learn that of the 160 applicants for admission to the medical faculty, which opened in October, only five failed in the entrance examination, or that seven of the senior staff appointed to date are West Indians. Jamaica has given the College a beautiful site, and the highest hopes are entertained for its future. At present, students will take University of London examinations, but it is intended that ultimately the College will expand into a university

granting its own degrees. The opening of the medical branch came first, because of the urgent need for doctors. It will be followed in successive years by the basic sciences and finally with arts courses. In West Africa, there are already 200 men and women in residence at Ibadan, living in temporary wooden buildings. Keen interest is shown in their work by the general public, and high hopes are pinned on their future services to their country. In Sierra Leone, the Secretary of State has offered to make some funds and facilities available to Fourah Bay College, provided that the new Legislative Council will appoint a Commission of Enquiry into all aspects of the case for giving it support before taking a final decision on its future. We await with anxiety the receipt of equally cheering news from Malaya and East Africa.

PROGRESS IN THE SUDAN

The Sudan has made a great step forward with its new constitution, taking in one stride a measure of political representation which nearly all Colonies have received in successive stages. As reported in the last number of *Empire*, the first meeting of the new Legislative Council was held on December 23. Immediately afterwards, the new Executive Council was appointed, six out of its twelve members being Sudanese. The Legislative Council first elected its leader, choosing Miralai Abdalla Bey Khalil, secretary of the Umma Party. After consultation with him, the Governor-General then announced the appointment of three Sudanese Ministers (agriculture, health and education), under-secretaries and executive councillors. An interim budget has already been passed, and the constitutional experiment is well on its way. These changes did not come out of the blue, but succeed the development of provincial councils, three of which, in the South, were constituted as recently as last November. Thus all parts of the country were able to choose representatives for the Assembly, though direct election was possible only in six towns. The boycott of the elections by the pro-Egyptian party, and the loss of ten lives in violent clashes, indicate that the Sudan has important problems to solve. But it has started well, and the victorious party, the Independence Front, has announced an ambitious ten-point programme, including priority for Sudanese in Government appointments, the establishment of co-operative societies, economic development, the uniting of the North and South and the final realisation of independence as soon as possible. Progress will be watched with interest throughout north-eastern Africa.

LIBERTY, FRATERNITY, EQUALITY

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, adopted in December with eight countries, including South Africa and the Soviet Union, abstaining, may well become a standard of liberty for the colonial peoples. 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,' it declares, and 'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.' In general, the Declaration is a re-statement in twentieth-century terms of nineteenth-century liberal ideas, but some articles are of special interest to colonial subjects, to whom the Declaration equally applies. For example, 'Nobody shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile'; 'Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality, or religion, have the right to marry'; 'Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay to equal work'; and 'Everyone has the right to education.' Some of the rights enumerated are not yet enjoyed in this country, but obviously it is in the Colonies that our greatest effort must be made if we are to achieve the rights laid down as a standard to which all peoples should try to conform. The Indian Constituent Assembly led the way, before the Declaration was adopted, by writing into the new Constitution an article abolishing untouchability, and making its practice a punishable offence. The Assembly does not pretend to believe that disabilities will now vanish like melting snow, but a lead has been given from the top, and it is now for the people to follow. Since the British delegates at U.N.O. voted for the Declaration of Human Rights, it would be well worth while for our own Government to consider whether, and in what form, a similar lead might not be given to colonial territories.

VENTURE

It is purely coincidental that we are able to embark on the first number of this journal under its new name by commenting on four new ventures of great promise. Only lack of space has prevented us from including a fifth—the discovery of the new drug 'Antrycide,' which is to become a powerful weapon against the tsetse fly. We hope that progress in the Colonies may go forward at a similar pace in future months: nothing would please us more than to be able to omit from these columns the note of criticism which we are so often compelled to sound.

Civilising The Sahibs

THE outside world has long puzzled over one extraordinary aspect of the British Empire. It is characteristic of all empires, but must surely be displayed in its most marked form by the British—that is, the apparent inability of the ruling people to benefit culturally by their contact with the ruled. 'Our culture is at present provincial,' the Scarbrough Report¹ told us in 1947, 'in the sense that it is purely Western,' and we had, in all honesty, to agree. We had not realised, however, quite how provincial we were until we read the analysis of the replies given by a representative sample of 1,921 people interviewed by Colonial Office investigators. 51 per cent. could not name a single British Colony; 75 per cent. did not know the difference between a Dominion and a Colony; and 77 per cent. live in a dream-world in which the British Colonies pay taxes to the Mother Country. A small but presumably happy minority of 3 per cent. has never heard of either Lord North or Marshall Aid, and imagines the United States to be a British Colony. This is even worse than provincial!

The Colonial Office has now published an extensive catalogue of books, pamphlets, films and exhibitions about the Colonies,² for use in schools and elsewhere. It is certainly time that such a step was taken, and the catalogue itself is an excellent publication. We hope the schools will pick it up with both hands and make full use of the material available to them.

We must, however, enter a caveat on the Introduction to the pamphlet. Here is displayed precisely the state of mind which has bred our ignorance—the conviction that we are the products of the greatest civilisation on earth, and that all we have to do is to lead less fortunate peoples in the track of our own footsteps. The pamphlet has been produced, we are told, 'as one means . . . of drawing attention to the fascinating story of the British Colonies and so of bringing home to us in Britain the part we have to play in maintaining the unity of the Commonwealth, and our responsibilities towards the peoples of the Colonies in particular.' This is necessary because 'few of us really appreciate that Britain is undertaking the biggest experiment in history—the development of the peoples of the Colonies to a state where they

can manage their own affairs, and the development of the idea of a world-wide family of self-governing nations.' Could anything be more paternal?

'This is not an experiment in power politics,' the Introduction goes on, '*it is a human experiment with peoples of many races and backgrounds and in many different stages of civilisation.*' Exactly. And what about the human beings in whose countries it is being tried? Are they undertaking no experiments? The British Empire is not a field lying open for the experiments and crusades of the people of Britain; it is a vast area in which all the inhabitants are facing problems which go to the root of their differing ways of life, in which all have responsibilities, and all—even the most primitive—have some contribution to make to the common cultural pool. If the people of the United Kingdom are to learn about the rest, it should not be primarily because we are politically responsible for them, but because we also wish to be civilised, cultured people, and can be so only if we take our cultural nourishment from the whole world which is open to us. The populations of the Colonies include representatives of all the world's great civilisations; they are worth learning about *in themselves*, not as objects of policies. As Lord Scarbrough's Committee pointed out, 'The East makes great efforts to know and understand the West.' The same is true of Africa. It is high time that the West reciprocated.

A considerable amount has already been done in the universities since the Scarbrough Report was published. The University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, for example, now houses between three and four times the number of students that it had before the war. It is true that most of them are taking Colonial Service courses, but it is a good sign. When the universities have surmounted their post-war difficulties, we shall see the fruits of decisions that are now being taken. A comparatively small field can then be classed as 'colonial,' and will no doubt be occupied by the vocational specialists. The rest will be open to students in all subjects, so that such a term as 'philosophy' will come to mean not merely 'western' philosophy, but a study which takes in Chinese, Indian, Islamic and other philosophies as well. The same principle will apply in other studies. There will also be scope for the implementation of the Scarbrough recommendation that civilisations other than our own should be studied in all their aspects, with the study

¹ Report of the Interdepartmental Commission, Commission of Enquiry on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies. H.M.S.O.

² Britain and the Colonies. H.M.S.O. 3d.

based on the relevant ancient and modern languages, as Greek and Roman civilisations have been studied for generations in this country.

This integration of cultures is what the British Empire really needs, and if it is achieved, the people of the United Kingdom will be able to make a much more genuine contribution to the advancement of the colonial peoples than we can ever make as long as we nurse our comforting illusions or remain unabashed in our present state of comparative ignorance. We have no doubt that even worse ignorance could be found elsewhere, but we are in a special position as one of the European peoples that are prepared to take upon ourselves the task of running an empire. As Burke pointed out, 'It is we who must change,' for adaptability and understanding are the first requirements of an imperial people.

The change of outlook is even more essential to an imperial people that is shedding its imperialism. We are not trying to create self-governing

states merely for the pleasure of seeing replicas of Britain emerging into nationhood throughout the world. We want to see them free to make their own contributions. We see immense promise for the world in the infinite variety of the cultural contributions that they will make as they take up their freedom. That is why we think that the British people should be told not only of the responsibilities and burdens they bear, and of the leadership that they are required to give, but also that the outside world is a richer place than most of them have ever dreamed of, with more colour, more gaiety, more light and more inspiration than they can ever find if their minds never leave home.

We therefore welcome *Britain and the Colonies* as at least a step in the right direction. We only hope that the first edition will be lapped up at once, and that before the second is printed, some responsible official will go quietly home with a copy of the Scarbrough Report, and then write an Introduction more worthy of the subject of the pamphlet.

AN AFRICAN APPEAL TO BRITAIN

By

★ Michael Scott

For two successive years now the writer has been asked by the leaders of the Herero tribe to appeal on their behalf to the United Nations and to the British Government for the restoration of their lands and the rehabilitation of their tribe, at present divided into eight separate sections or 'Reserves' in South-West Africa and four sections in British Bechuanaland. For three years these Chiefs have been refused permission by the Union Government to come to Britain or to the United Nations when the future of their country has been under discussion.

There is a history in this appeal to Britain which the Herero people in their despair have asked me to make for them. It is a story of fidelity towards Britain which has perhaps no equal in Africa.

The first time that this Herero tribe appealed to the English sovereign was in the reign of Queen Victoria, when fifty leading Hereros petitioned the Queen to take their land and people under her protection to save them from the duplicity and brutality of the German colonisers. 'We wish to see our

children grow up more civilised than we have had any chance of being" they said to her.

Unfortunately the advice of the Governor was not taken and the result was a German conquest of South-West Africa in which the whole tragic history of Europe was foreshadowed in an attempted genocide of this proud cattle-ranching people. Strangely enough this was inspired by none other than the father of Hermann Goering, whose swindling activities as a trader amongst the Hereros and Hottentots had ended in his flight for protection to the British port of Walvis Bay. From there he went to Germany and appealed to Bismarck to send a German army to annex the territory.

As head of a trading organisation which had followed the German missionaries, Goering cheated the unfortunate Africans out of thousands of head of cattle and took possession of their lands until—goaded into revolt—Von Trotha then massacred them in one of the most dreadful episodes in all that dark history of the white man's past dealings on that continent. The whole terrible story is

told in the British Government's Blue Book (C.D. 9146) of how an extermination order was carried out against this defenceless people, and how they were accordingly reduced from 85,000 to 15,000. And yet the British Blue Book records that, from gratitude to the missionaries for bringing them the Christian Gospel, their chiefs ordered that no missions or missionaries were to be harmed, and that the order was scrupulously obeyed.

War-time Promises

During the first world war, the present petitioners claim, Lord Buxton, Governor of the Cape, promised the Hereros that if the Germans were defeated their lands would be returned to them, and the Chief's eldest son, Frederick Mahareru, crossed the Kalahari from British Bechuanaland with some of his tribe and urged them to assist the Allies.

After the war the Mandate was given to South Africa to administer on behalf of His Britannic Majesty. But so far from their traditional lands being returned to them, the Hereros say that they were driven away from the lands which they had been allowed to occupy after the war ended; and that this was done by means of intimidation and the burning down of their houses. Their lands were then given in tracts of hundreds of square miles to families of Boer settlers.

During the Union Government's tenure of the Mandate the Herero tribe has been kept divided into reserves, consisting mainly of semi-desert land, passes being required to go from one to another. The incredibly low wage of nine shillings per month is paid to those employed as shepherds of the valuable karakul sheep which have brought large fortunes to the white farmers of South-West Africa. Farmers are able to sell the skins of lambs at one day old for about three pounds each for fashionable ladies in London, New York and Paris.

That section of the tribe which was able to find protection in British territory has done very well at cattle farming in Bechuanaland. They say they do not want South-West Africa to be brought permanently into the Union as South Africa is proposing, since that would bring the territory permanently under the Union's oppressive segregation and pass laws and deprive the African people of all hope of a return of their rightful lands.

For three years in succession now South Africa has defied the wish of the United Nations, expressed by a two-thirds majority

each time, and culminating this year in a 43 to one vote against South Africa.

It should be remarked that all other former German colonies have been brought under the Trusteeship system. But the Union is now proposing legislation which will be tantamount to integration of South-West Africa and the Union. It will give six elected representatives in the South African Parliament to the European population of 38,000, which, of course, includes the German population, some of whom were to have been deported as active Nazis until Dr. Malan renounced the order. There will be no elected representation at all for ten times that number of native and coloured people. To represent them, the Government proposes itself to choose one European senator!

Such are some of the reasons why the Hereros in Bechuanaland, who are well aware of the plight of their fellow tribesmen in South-West Africa, and believe that the whole existence of their tribe is threatened there, have raised the cost of the writer's travel by air twice across Africa and the Atlantic to appeal for them to the United Nations and more especially to the British Government.

The African people have to-day an almost unlimited faith in British justice—it is not merely a matter of sentiment, but of wishing to safeguard their lands as they have been safeguarded in the British Protectorates. It need hardly be pointed out how much depends for the whole future of African development upon Britain maintaining the confidence and co-operation of the African people. She cannot afford to sacrifice that in order to appease bad faith. It is time the British Government gave unmistakable support to these people who have kept their faith in Britain.

★ The Reverend Michael Scott is the son of an Anglican parson who went to South Africa at the age of 19 and worked amongst lepers for a year before starting his training for Holy Orders. In 1935 he went to India as Chaplain to the Bishop of Bombay, and returned to England just before the war. He joined the R.A.F., but was invalided out, and returned to South Africa in 1943. The conditions which he saw as Assistant Priest at St. Alban's Coloured Mission in Johannesburg, and Chaplain to an Orphanage for Coloured Children led him into active agitation. When anti-Indian legislation in Natal was met by passive resistance, Michael Scott joined personally in the resistance movement, for which he was imprisoned. His other activities included personal investigation of the conditions of Africans living in the shanty towns around Johannesburg, and the exposure of conditions of farm labour in the Bethal district of the Eastern Transvaal. The result of his work for the Hereros is seen in the above article. Though no longer tied to one diocese, he holds a General Licence to preach in the Diocese of Johannesburg, where he takes services when in the area.



COMPASS

Compass:—1. Measure, proper proportion. 2. Artifice, ingenuity; craft, cunning. 3. Instrument for taking measurements and describing circles. 4. Circle. . . . 11. Instrument for determining the magnetic meridian or one's direction with respect to it. Thus the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for the verb; the noun is even more surprising, and inclusive.

Measure or proper proportion: One might start with Indonesia, where the Dutch launched an offensive at the end of December, technically successful but almost certainly an ultimate failure, their one first-class man, Van Mook, removed—in 1943 he used to talk about 'shifting the economic house' so as not to impede the 'roots of the tree of liberty.' There is France, with 130,000 troops launching yet another offensive on Vietnam, the Cinderella of Asia. There is South Africa, where the latest move of the Malan Government is to abolish the Native Representative Council—a month ago, *Die Burger* was attacking Skinnard and Driberg for their criticism: where, it asked, is there a Native Representative Council in British territory? There is also the Bloemfontein meeting of mid-December, when the cautious African National Congress linked up for the first time with the militant All-African Convention, on a future common programme to force equal rights and a minimum of 10s. a day. There is Southern Rhodesia with a new 'Bill of Rights,' granting 75s. a month, long-service gratuities, overtime, holidays with pay, to all workers—except miners, railwaymen, domestics, farmers. . . . There is Puerto Rico, over in the Caribbean, in November the first American dependency to elect its own Governor, Luis Munoz Marin. There are the Virgin Islands, with the Negro Governor Hastie, the most successful in history. There is the U.S.A. herself, where a man three-quarters white got five years for marrying a white woman in the South—and in Washington, the new Truman Democrats elected William Dawson to be the first Negro Chairman of a Committee of Congress. Finally, there is the U.S.S.R. Was it a French map which showed every non-Russian area in the line of the German advance with its autonomy removed, immediately after the war?

What of our own picture at the beginning of 1949? In Malaya, 482 killed by terrorists since the state of emergency was declared in June, most of them Chinese. In Ceylon, across the sea, a Commons' delegation arriving in Colombo, with a Mace and a Speaker's Chair to present to the Ceylon Parliament. For this picture of peace, Ceylon is blackballed by Russia once again at the United Nations.

But the bearing (seen from London) is undoubtedly technological, functional—advertising in the *Crown Colonist* now runs to 136 pages. . . . The British four-year Recovery Programme sets a target by 1952 of \$1,000,000,000 to the Colonies from the United Kingdom,

and \$950,000,000 from them. The symbol is in dollars, because the plans must be integrated into the European Master-plan. The planners say: 'It would be inconsistent with Trusteeship and would moreover be economically impracticable to subordinate progress in these fields, fundamental to the healthy development of the native community, to a breakneck increase in food and raw material production wholly designed for export.' They also say that a large increase in exports is fundamental to better colonial standards of living.

Three pieces of major technical news. The Government announce the successful testing of *Antrycide*, evolved by Imperial Chemical Industries as M.7555. A shot of this, price 2s. 1½d., will immunise a cow from tsetse infection for several months. Two million shots are to be prepared this year; when water, heat and soil are improved, then we may talk of an Argentine in Africa. Still, it is a great technical triumph, important for Africans and Britons alike. One week later, early in January, international scientists invited by the British Government from a list prepared by the World Food and Agricultural Organisation, report what we know already of *Swollen Shoot*, which has affected 50,000,000 of the 400,000,000 cocoa trees on the Gold Coast. Mealy-bugs bring the virus from older forest-trees: ants bring the mealy-bugs, which they use as cows. This, not unnaturally, the farmers will not believe: all they see are trees, still good perhaps for another three years: the Government offer up to £40 an acre for cutting and replanting: but this will only keep them for two years, and what of the other five when the new trees are growing? Perhaps if there was more Home Rule. . . . Finally, high authorities are recalled from East Africa to consider slowing up the groundnut scheme, in favour of transport development, for which plans of £17,000,000 are laid, in common with neighbouring territories like the Belgian Congo. The present estimate of cost for the groundnut dream is £100,000,000, the money spent so far £15,000,000, the total gain to date, 52,000 acres planted, the majority with the poorer but surer sunflower.

African technicians: Dr. Renner is promoted Assistant Director of Medical Services in Sierra Leone, following Dr. Manuwa, now A.D.M.S. in Nigeria in charge of the Western Provinces. Regional development boards, with closer control by the people, are to go up throughout Nigeria. In Nigeria again, 'shadow' Representative Committees, nearly all African, have been set up for cotton, for groundnuts, for bennised. The Gold Coast have set up an Agricultural Development Corporation,

POINTS



which is to found almost immediately another company to develop a groundnut project in the Northern Territories, leading to 24,000 acres after six years, one-third groundnuts, one-third millet, one-third grass. Kenya plans compulsion for better husbandry, with an African Training Centre at Maseno early this year. Someone asked if an American Negro plant pathologist had been invited to go to the Gold Coast on the swollen shoot enquiry. The reply was, there was none.

Too much technology? But (according to a report just issued) the African cotton growers of Uganda have been fleeced of £600,000 in the last few years by dishonest contractors, almost all Indian. This cheating is apparently organised from the top downward, the buyer handing over 10 per cent. more cotton, even 15 per cent. more than paid for. He makes up for this by cheating at the scales. For their part, the growers attempt a little cheating on their own, but they are not so successful.

Too much technology? An expert has flown to Guiana to examine the cutting of a channel through the mud-bar at the mouth of Essequibo River. This will liberate shipping for the hard-wood forests of the interior. This in turn will provide work, in part, for some of the 100,000 people who may be resettled in the Colony in the next 10 years. The Trinidad Census Report, just issued, gives an increase of 35.7 per cent. since 1931—and Barbados is more crowded than Trinidad. A Commission has arrived to consider the unification of the Civil Services of the Region, in consultation with the Standing Committee for Closer Association recently established. Too much technology? Mr. Bustamante thinks so, for he spoke once again against Federation at a recent gathering, asserting that the expense would fall on the two largest islands. At the Third West Indian Conference, which opened at Guadeloupe on the 1st December with delegations from 15 territories, the main agenda was Industrial Development and Economic Productivity.

The West African political picture is still full of drama. In the Gold Coast, the Constitutional Committee under Mr. Justice Coussey will consist of 38 members. The Chiefs caused some comment by voting only for themselves; but they are being wooed by the Convention, which has dropped the extremist Kwame Nkrumah as Secretary, and appointed him as Honorary Treasurer. Its reward seems to be closer co-operation: A. Addo, a Convention man and a commoner, secured 60 votes at a

secret ballot of the Joint Provincial Council, against the successful candidate's 67. In Nigeria, the tension continues between the Ibo and the Yoruba, roughly divided between the National Council and the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, with both sides bidding for support from the Hausa, for the first time in the political field. The one hope seems the largely non-racial Nigerian Youth Movement, to which all the more thoughtful Nigerian politicians belong.

At Victoria Falls early in February a meeting is to be held on Federation into a Central African unit. The main agents are Sir Godfrey Huggins of Southern Rhodesia, whose United Party swept the board last autumn, and R. Welensky from Northern Rhodesia, whose supporters gained eight of the ten elected seats. Both men are virtual dictators in their own region: but Welensky, through his paper and his supporters, seems to be founding his power on the race hatred of the immigrants flooding the Copperbelt. In particular, Rex l'Ange talks like a miniature Malan. The situation needs watching, especially since recent moves in the Mining Union, where Brian Goodwin, who worked with Africans on the World Federation of Trade Unions, has been ousted in favour of Welensky's brother.

The Council Hall of the Sukumaland Federation has been formally opened at Malaya, 60 miles south of Lake Victoria. It represents 1,000,000 people, or one-fifth of all the people in Tanganyika Territory. The Chairman, Chief Majbele, particularly recalled Sir Donald Cameron, who helped the first seven small groupings 15 years ago. The Federation will administer a Treasury, in close contact with a development team of senior officers, administration, education, agricultural, veterinary, livestock, water, and forestry.

That ends *Compass-Points* for this month. If you have any complaint about them, or any suggestions, let us know. We can anticipate one of them. The emphasis is on technology; but it is not on technicians. We blame America and Russia for their differing forms of materialism, brought about, largely, by the need in the last hundred years or so to develop the resources of both those great land-masses for the local peoples untrammelled by political considerations. The development of the last remaining areas of the world, especially Africa, can only go forward with the people, understood, considered, respected, at every turn. That is the formula of Democratic Socialism, or it should be. But is it? As anyone who follows colonial news will know, the compass wavers. At the moment, the paper, *West Africa*, is pushing for Lord Milverton to replace Lord Listowel as spokesman of the Colonial Office in the House of Lords. It does not seem to see that efficiency can be supplied in plenty by organisers, by a bureaucracy, from which Nigeria's late 'classical' Governor springs; but that there is a danger of losing in all these widespread schemes the familiar touch by which, and for which, all true Socialists must live.

COLONIAL OPINION . . .

Home Truths

The Kikuyu heard some very plain speaking by two of their own tribal leaders last Sunday when the Kenya African Union held a meeting at Ndeiya for the purpose of opening a new branch there.

'In the old days,' said Senior Chief Koinange, 'the young men of the tribe obeyed their parents, worked in the shamba and looked after the goats and cattle.' . . .

He complained of the idleness which marks the modern youth, and said that only hard work would bring wealth. Hard work was the only thing which would make the African rich enough to do his own importing from overseas—'and then we will do great things,' he said.

But the worst failing of the Kikuyu at the moment was drink, he went on. In the old days only adults were allowed to drink, and they only drank when the day's work was done. Now, however, everyone drank. . . . It wouldn't do, he said, and he hoped the Kikuyu would give up thieving, drunkenness and idleness.

Mr. Jomo Kenyatta, President of the Kenya African Union, began where Senior Chief Koinange left off. 'People say,' he proclaimed, 'that the European is doing the African down—but the man who is keeping the African down is the African himself.'

Warning to his theme, he said the Africans kept asking for more land, but when they were given it, they let it go to rack and ruin. He was extremely angry with the people of Ndeiya, for they were particularly bad offenders in that respect. When they had been given their land there, it had been good fertile land with plenty of trees. Now it was bare. Trees were most important, and anyone who cut one down should plant another in its place. . . .

They were too fond of shouting for something and then doing nothing about it when they got it, he went on. They had demanded permission to grow tea and coffee. Permission had been given—but not a single person had done anything about it at all. Too many people were loafing about doing no work and leaving their land to spoil. 'If you want to be respected, you must tell the truth, work hard at everything, and stop all this stealing and robbing.' . . .

He also appealed to the Kikuyu to give up bribery and corruption. Justice was impossible among people who depended on graft.

East African Standard, October 8, 1948.

The Price of Self-Government

Some promise us that self-government will bring us everything we need. All hardships as individuals and our ills as a society, they say, are due to our being badly governed. When self-government comes, all the things that have gone wrong will come right at once. . . .

We must do some sober thinking and face hard facts. Self-government is not a magic wand. It will not create a heaven for us as soon as it comes. It has not done that for any people at any time in history, and we have no reason to suppose that a new Magic Era will begin with us. It has not begun with India or Burma or Ceylon.

Self-government means primarily that we shall be able to choose those who manage the affairs of our country,

and we shall have the power to see to it that they carry out our wishes.

But it also means that we shall bear our burden—the whole lot. What we are asking for is the freedom to carry our own loads. To put it another way, we want to be grown-up. We want to shoulder the burden of providing ourselves with food and clothing and shelter, and do all the complicated things which a modern State must do. . . .

The best way to show one's willingness and fitness to bear a burden is for one to stoop and lift it. Let us stoop right now, wherever we are, to lift the burden. Let us stoop to clean the muck of bribery and corruption and backbiting and fault-finding and blaming. Those first, because they weaken our moral capital without which our dreams will never come true. Then let us stoop again to clean the villages, and dig the earth, and produce the things and ideas we want.

The Price of Self-government is very, very high. It is not ease, but toil; not unearned gains, but the joy of selfless service; not needlessness for thought, but long, creative thinking. We shall have to be a disciplined country. But the price is worth paying for the freedom to feel a part of the human race, and the freedom to make our contribution to its life and its heritage. . . .

K. A. OBISAFO.

Ghana Statesman, Gold Coast, September 24, 1948.

Tinkering with the Problem

The Report of the Singapore Labour Department for the year 1947 issued last week by Mr. R. P. Bingham, the Commissioner for Labour, reveals that in the new Labour Ordinance which is expected to be introduced this year it is proposed to increase the minimum age of child labourers to 14 years and to provide for compulsory registration of young persons. The law at present permits a child over the age of 12 years to work as a labourer, and the only limit imposed is that the child shall not be employed on labour that is harmful to its health and must not work at night, and yet the Report admits that during the year under review 'it is estimated that perhaps 100 children under 12 years of age are employed.' But nothing is mentioned in the Report about any action taken against the employers of such children. . . . In the Federation under the Children and Young Persons Ordinance of 1947, even children of seven years may be employed for a period of four hours a day, and in case they are attending school, the only condition for their employment is that the period of labour plus the period of school attendance shall not together exceed six hours in any 24 and except between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.! But it is common knowledge that many Indian children of seven years and above are being employed on the rubber estates and elsewhere for even longer periods and without their attending any school at all. Unless this cruel practice is totally stopped and the growing children are given compulsory education, any other reform in this direction will be merely tinkering with the problem.

Indian Daily Mail, Singapore, October 18, 1948.

I Felt Free

We published in *Empire* in November, 1948, an extract from the left-wing Jamaican newspaper *Public Opinion*. It was the view of *Public Opinion* that some Jamaicans were going to Liberia because in Jamaica 'no personal accomplishment can assure to' the negroid person 'the experience of complete human dignity and confidence.' We now quote from an article by Paul Robeson, the great American Negro singer, who sees the position of the coloured Jamaican in a rather different light.

I have just returned from a concert tour through Jamaica and Trinidad. I feel now as if I had drawn my first breath of fresh air in many years. Once before I felt like that. When I first entered the Soviet Union I said to myself, 'I am a human being, I don't have to worry about my colour.'

In the West Indies I felt all that and something new besides. I felt that for the first time I could see what it will be like when Negroes are free in their own land. . . .

Certainly my people in the islands are poor. They are desperately poor. In Kingston, Jamaica, I saw many families living in shells of old automobiles, hollowed out and turned upside down. Many are unemployed. They are economically subjected to landholders, British, American and native.

But the people are on the road to freedom. I saw Negro professionals: artists, writers, scientists, scholars. And above all I saw Negro workers walking erect and proud.

These people were in a land they did not yet completely own. But they were free to meet together and talk together and act together. They had the dignity of men who could make their own mistakes, men who could cut their own throats or make their own world. They did not fear that a group of white men could come to them in the middle of the night to hang them or burn them.

That freedom from fear is a new thing to American Negroes. I am never for one moment unaware that I live in a land of Jim Crow. I do not grow angry about it. I think I understand it and I understand how we must fight it. But understanding or not, the realisation of Jim Crow does not leave me. Nor do I think it can, even for a moment, leave any American Negro. . . .

The Negroes of Jamaica and Trinidad may form the first free Negro nation on earth. In the light of that freedom, dawning now, they welcomed me as someone who might be able to help them in the days of their freedom. They look for, and one day will find, leaders who will sit as Negro representatives among the world's statesmen; they will find leaders to represent not a minority, but a nation of Negroes.

The march to freedom by the Negroes of the West Indies is a matter of profound importance to Americans. The sound of their marching can be heard by the Negroes of our country, and their own marching time will be quickened by it.

Reynolds News, January 9, 1949.

Correction

We have received from B. B. Salami, Secretary of the Nigerian National Democratic Party, a denial of the statements published in "Empire," Vol. II, No. 5 (Page 12), that the National Democratic Party had severed its connection with the National Council of Nigeria and had expelled Dr. Azikiwe. "Empire" based its account on reports in the Nigerian press.

LANDOWNERSHIP AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE COLONIES : I

By Molly Mortimer

HE who plans land-use plans society. This axiom has always been recognised and used as a political lever in revolutionary times: the French and Russian revolutions with their emphasis on peasant land hunger, the Irish and Jewish problems, German Imperial claims, were all dominated by the land question. Yet for some reason it appears to hold little place in the minds of evolutionary planners, although it is as vital in modern industrial society as it ever was in the agricultural communities of the past.

To-day, there is a greater possibility of conscious planning than in the past, but land remains the basis of social organisation and of economic and political disputes. Planners must always reckon with the fact that a community of peasant owners will tend towards stability and conservatism; landless labour towards change. A land tax may break up large estates, a head tax force labour on to them. Religious custom may set apart good land; polygamy and primogeniture may keep family estates intact, equality of inheritance fragmentise them as in France. Bureaucracy may ruin productiveness and with it the basic wealth and strength of a country; lack of land control may ruin great areas as in the United States 'dust bowl.'

While the organisation of landownership is vital in all communities, it takes on an especial importance in colonial areas. Liversage in his book on colonial land tenure says of Africa that the subject is of 'staggering importance . . . it is not too much to say that colonial territories will be made or marred for generations' by its handling. Many writers have pointed out the relationship of the neglect of land problems to the decline of the Roman Empire and the old South American Empires; and in British Colonies one administrator after another, year in and year out for the last century has reported that land disputes form the basis of political disputes and the majority of risings and rebellions. One commission after another states that the settlement of land problems is the most urgent and outstanding colonial problem to be faced to-day.

A certain lack of clear response by the Government to these appeals may be due to two causes. Firstly, it was unfortunate that the noble sentiments of the Select Committee on Aborigines of 1837, which pointed out the importance of ascertaining native land tenure and the need to protect their rights against European claims, should in fact have ushered in the era of liberal *laissez faire*, when the governments of the day could neither develop the Empire themselves nor control those who did. Native and white man were left to find 'equilibrium,' with the result, in the words of Lord Olivier, 'that appropriation of native lands were on a scale unprecedented in the history of mankind.' Secondly, colonial administrations, hampered by ignorance largely due to

(Continued on page 11.)

Guide to Books

Tomorrow's Continent

By Peter Penn and Lucie Street. (Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd. 9/-.)

Colonel Penn and his wife have seen a vision, and in this book they describe it with the enthusiasm of St. Paul. The vision is that of a technologist's heaven (or a humanist's hell) being created throughout the length and breadth of Africa, an Africa in which swamps exist only to be drained, rivers to be dammed, deserts to be irrigated, men to be mass producers. Aeroplanes will fly overhead, canals will intersect the grasslands, and there will be, according to the blurb on the cover, 'wide concrete roads crossing and re-crossing Africa, fanning out to reach African villages and new British townships.' And the purpose? The blurb answers this too—'With imaginative handling this vast territory can recreate *our* greatness, and release *us* from bondage to the dollar. Here *we* have coal, mineral wealth, and fertility, and unlimited water power—and all virtually neglected until the present day' (my italics). Who are 'we'? That is not quite clear, though it is fair to say that the authors show sufficient interest in the individual African to emphasise that all these things can be done only with his co-operation, and it is true that some of them must be done if he is to be decently fed and housed and raised to the status of a free human being. It is a pity, though, that they have envisaged planning only on a large scale, and that their idea of gaining African co-operation seems to be to persuade the African first into accepting their concepts and then into helping to carry them out. The book is useful, for there are numerous imaginative and feasible suggestions, and in the foreground of the picture is always the village African as he is now, carrying his grain on his head, collecting tiny eggs from his bedraggled hens, spending his evenings without light or the occupations that require light. Yet one cannot think that the answer to the question posed by such conditions is the creation of another American civilisation in the Old World. Readers in search of more light will find some of it in Rita Hinden's new pamphlet, *Commonsense and Colonial Development*.

M. N.

Colour Prejudice

By Sir Alan Burns, G.C.M.G. (Allen & Unwin, 12/6.)

The author of this self-revealing book makes no claim to be a social scientist or a man interested in the diverse cultural traditions of the people among whom he has lived. He writes on a difficult subject, with disarming candour, as 'a Colonial civil servant of long and distinguished experience in tropical West Africa and the West Indies.' This experience appears to have been less happy in West Africa than in the West Indies and he now writes 'with particular reference to the relationship between whites and negroes.' He has undoubtedly borne the White Man's Burden with an admirable sense of duty, sustained by a rational belief in the technologically superior civilisation of the White Man. The fact of colour prejudice has disturbed his mind for years. He sees in it the main obstacle to willing acceptance by backward

peoples of the benefits derived from dependence on or close association with the British Empire. Consequently he has been drawn to study the *obstacle* rather than the human beings involved, white and black, with their hopes and fears, strength or weakness and their aspirations, legitimate or otherwise. He has read fairly widely, making a conscientious effort to discover 'truth' by weighing evidence for and against. He now unburdens his mind by presenting a rough balance sheet of published opinions and personal talks which have sought to justify or condemn or explain this prejudice. The conclusion he arrives at is indisputable, as far as it goes: that the relationship between 'whites and negroes' could be happier if both sides, while preserving their identity, made efforts to improve their manners by displaying the mutual respect and consideration to which both 'whites and negroes' can claim to be entitled. Incidentally, the reader learns that the author is not unaware of other factors which may be contributing to unsatisfactory relations between 'whites and negroes' in their capacity of rulers and ruled. There are Dangerous Thoughts in the world to-day with which he appears to be out of sympathy, for instance, nationalism, socialism, communism. He under-rates or ignores the influence of these Thoughts on attitudes to colour prejudice. No information is given about recent research on methods of overcoming or controlling such prejudice nor about the healthy growing interest in cultural traditions other than those of the White Man. 'The old order changeth, Yielding place to new.' It may be that colour prejudice cannot be effectively dealt with apart from certain other prejudices nor without recognising that sympathetic insight is essential to the building up of satisfactory 'human relations.'

D. D.

Africana. A Quarterly Magazine. Vol. 1; No. 1.

(The West African Society, 6, Grange Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne 4. 2s.)

(Congratulations to all concerned in the production of this attractive magazine—the spontaneous expression of national consciousness among West Africans, in the sphere of social and cultural activity'—Editorial). The conception of nationhood which inspires this magazine is a high one. The contents are varied, something for all tastes, 'a common forum where we can all exchange ideas.' Among many good contributions one will be of special interest to those British readers who know something of the social problems in a highly industrialised society. O. K. Ibare-Akinsan, writing on Rhythmic Folks, comments:—'Africans, perhaps even more than other people, value personality above almost all other things—the definite link of man and man. What they cannot abide is the entirely impersonal process, the machine and the organisation, which forms no picture in their minds.' *Africana* should be a success. It deserves the support it is sure to receive.

D. D.

Parliament

The following questions have been asked in the House of Commons by Members of Parliament with whom the Bureau is in contact.

Basutoland: Africanisation. Replying to Mr. Skinnard, Mr. Noel-Baker said that, apart from posts in the public service which had always been held by Africans, 99 posts formerly occupied by Europeans had been filled in recent years by Africans. These included postmasters, revenue clerks, trained nurses, etc. It was also intended that Africans should replace Europeans in 62 further posts when vacancies arose and qualified persons became available. The total number of posts in 'lower grades' was 175, of which 107 were at present held by Africans and 68 by Europeans. (December 2.)

Nyasaland Legislative Council. Mr. Skinnard asked the Secretary of State by what method of selection the two new African and one new Asiatic members of the Legislative Council of Nyasaland were to be selected. Mr. Rees-Williams replied that the Asiatic member would be chosen from a panel of three named by the Indian Chamber of Commerce. The Africans would be appointed by the Governor from a panel of five chosen by the African Protectorate Council. (December 8.)

Falkland Islands: Cost of Living. In reply to Mr. John Parker, Mr. Rees-Williams said that the cost of imported foodstuffs and clothing in the Falkland Islands depended on circumstances outside the control of the Falkland Islands Government. The Governor had set up a Committee to examine the cost of living; meanwhile an interim increase of 2d. an hour on the existing cost-of-living bonus had been granted. (December 8.)

British Guiana: Shooting Inquiry. Mr. Harry Hynd asked when the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the shooting of plantation workers on the Enmore Sugar Estate, British Guiana would be published; and in what circumstances lawyers acting for the workers withdrew from the inquiry. Mr. Rees-Williams replied that the question had been referred to the Governor. (December 8.)

Kenya: African Settlement. Mr. John Hynd asked what progress was being made in the settlement in new areas of Africans from eroded areas in Kenya. Mr. Creech Jones replied that new areas for settlement were frequently examined, but the main emphasis was upon improving occupied land and then re-settling the former occupiers on it. Steady progress was being made in all areas. Settlement schemes in progress included Makuene, where 75 Akamba families had been settled, and Gede, where 342 families had been installed. (December 15.)

British Guiana and British Honduras: Evans Report. Mr. John Parker asked the Secretary of State what steps he proposed to take to implement the Evans Report on settlement in British Guiana and British Honduras. Mr. Creech Jones replied that he had discussed the recommendations with the two Governors concerned, and with the Colonial Development Corporation. Much preliminary work would be required before any large-scale operations could begin. He then made a detailed statement too long for inclusion here. (December 17.)

Colonial Administrative Service. Mr. H. D. Hughes asked the Secretary of State how many Africans for the Colonial Administrative Service in 1946-47 and 1947-48 were educated in independent schools and in state-maintained schools respectively; how many were Colonial subjects; and what was the process of selection and the minimum educational qualification required. The following points are selected from Mr. Creech Jones' long reply. An analysis of 683 candidates selected for the Colonial Service between June 1, 1945, and December 31, 1946, showed that 363 came from independent schools and 213 from public elementary and state-aided secondary schools. In many Colonies, especially the West Indies, the majority of administrative posts were already held by locally-born officers selected under local arrangements. In order to increase the number, a training scheme costing a million pounds had been initiated under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, and the number of scholarships already awarded under this scheme was 10 in 1946, 70 in 1947, and 95 in 1948. Amongst the qualities looked for in candidates were a constructive interest in colonial problems and freedom from colour or other prejudices which would hinder good relations with the people of the Colonies. There was no minimum educational requirement for the Administrative Service, but it was desirable that those selected should be of the intellectual capacity of those who secure first or second-class honours degrees. There had been many successful candidates who had not been to a university but whose war records gave a clear indication that they were of this standard. Most selected candidates came from the United Kingdom, but there were also special arrangements to enable candidates in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa to be considered. (December 17.)

(Continued from page 9.)

lack of money and staff, did not comprehend either native society or its systems of landholding, and only a rare missionary or trader was interested in native custom for its own sake. It is only recently that anthropologists have laid bare the infinite variety and complexity of native land tenure and its vital social and religious significance; have explained how European disruption of native land holding has destroyed a whole way of life.

In England to-day, the conveyancing of a piece of land, though sometimes complicated, is an economic fact, possibly tinged with sentiment. It is only if we study our own feudal system—at once a system of government and landholding—or imagine the national feeling that would be aroused were a large part of England to be transferred to foreign hands, that we can get a faint shadow of how vital land tenure is in the whole relationship of the individual to the community in native society. Every colonial administrator could echo the words of the Governor of Fiji in 1945: 'The land is the greatest asset of the race and is held in trust for posterity. If the Fijian loses his land or allows its fertility to decline, the Fijian race will be destroyed.'

IN OUR LAND

By Harold M. Telemaque

In our land,
Poppies do not spring
From atoms of young blood,
So gaudily where men have died:
In our land,
Stiletto cane blades
Sink into our hearts,
And drink our blood.

In our land,
Sin is not deep,
And bends before the truth,
Asking repentently for pardon:
In our land,
The ugly stain
That blotted Eden garden
Is sunk deep only.

In our land,
Storms do not strike
For territory's fences,
Elbow room, nor breathing spaces:
In our land,
The hurricane
Of clashes break our ranks
For tint of eye.

In our land,
We do not breed
That taloned king, the eagle,
Nor make emblazonry of lions:
In our land,
The black birds
And the chickens of our mountains
Speak our dreams.

(From *Burnt Bush*, a collection of poems by two Trinidadian Negro writers, Harold M. Telemaque and A. M. Clarke. *Burnt Bush* is dedicated 'To the New West Indian'.)

Activities of the Bureau

Report on Nigeria

Dr. Rita Hinden and Mr. Reginald Sorensen, M.P., who flew to Nigeria on January 7 to attend the conference of the Nigerian Youth League, will report on their tour at a meeting to be held at 7 p.m. on February 14, at the Mary Sumner Hall, Tufton Street, London, S.W.1. Mr. Frank Horrabin, Chairman of the Bureau, will preside. An application form for tickets is enclosed with this number of *Venture*.

Commonsense and Colonial Development

This pamphlet, written by Dr. Rita Hinden, is now available. It will be sent free to Colonial Bureau members and to members of the Fabian Society. An application form for other orders is enclosed with this number of *Venture* (price, 1/-, 1/1 post free).

Correspondence with the Colonial Office

The Secretary of State's reply to the Bureau's representations on the subject of *Development in British Guiana* was published in the January number of *Empire*. The Secretary of State has replied to the Bureau that he still has under consideration the question of the application to colonial territories of the principles of new British legislation against monopolies and restrictive practices; that in Northern Rhodesia the Government, the Mine Officials' Association, the Mine Workers' Union and the Chamber of Mines are still discussing the problem of the *advancement of Africans in industry* dealt with in the Dalglish Report; and that he is unable to accept the view of the Bureau that *civil servants' salaries in East Africa* should immediately be based on a single basic salary plus expatriation allowances for officers recruited from outside the territories concerned.

Colonial Development Corporation

The Bureau has written to the Chairman of the Colonial Development Corporation for information on the projects already approved by the Corporation and the extent of the Corporation's participation in them. This

action was taken after Members of Parliament had been referred to the Corporation and to the Overseas Food Corporation by Ministers answering questions on subjects which fall within their field. The correspondence is proceeding, and any action will be determined by the forthcoming ruling by the Speaker of the House of Commons on the extent of Ministers' responsibility to answer such questions.

For Reference

CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER

Comment

The Gold Coast Makes a Start	- - - - -	1
The New Universities	- - - - -	1
Progress in the Sudan	- - - - -	2
Liberty, Fraternity, Equality	- - - - -	2
Civilising the Sahibs	- - - - -	3
An African Appeal to Britain. By Michael Scott	- - - - -	4
Compass Points	- - - - -	6
Colonial Opinion	- - - - -	8
Land Ownership and Social Change: I. By M. Mortimer	- - - - -	9
Guide to Books	- - - - -	10
Parliament	- - - - -	11

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